United Nations ST/IC/2008/31

Secretariat

20 June 2008

Information circular*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: **2008 competitive examinations for Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers**

1. The purpose of the present information circular is to invite applications from staff members of the Secretariat at the P-3 level and below who wish to take, in accordance with the provisions of administrative instructions ST/AI/1998/7 and ST/AI/2000/1, as amended by administrative instruction ST/AI/2003/1, one or more of the following competitive examinations which will be held in 2008:

(a) The competitive examination for Russian-language verbatim reporters;

(b) The competitive examination for Russian-language editors;

(c) The competitive examination for Russian-language translators/précis-writers.

2. The competitive examinations for Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers will be held tentatively on **1, 2 and 3 October 2008** in New York, Geneva, Moscow and other locations according to the number and location of qualified candidates convoked for the examinations. The purpose of these examinations is to establish rosters from which present and future vacancies for Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers will be filled. When vacancies occur in a service, successful candidates will be recruited from the roster for that service, subject to the requirements of the service in terms of subject-matter expertise and language combinations.

3. The examinations are open to staff members of the United Nations at the P-3 level and below who meet the eligibility requirements, as well as qualified external candidates. Staff members from subsidiary organs of the United Nations and staff members whose service is limited to a particular organ, fund or programme of the United Nations or special missions are considered external candidates for the purpose of these examinations. Such candidates, if successful, will be offered a new appointment with the United Nations subject to normal United Nations recruitment procedures and standards. Staff members who are successful in an examination and

* Expiration date of the present information circular: 31 December 2008.

are selected for inclusion in the respective roster will be assigned to fill vacancies for Russian-language posts as they occur in the language services/sections/units in New York, Vienna, Geneva, Nairobi or Bangkok. Assignments are subject to rotation (mobility) and successful candidates may thereafter be called upon to serve at other duty stations in Africa, Asia, Europe, or at Headquarters, according to the needs of the Organization. Successful candidates are expected to serve a **minimum of five years** in language posts. The assignment of staff members of the United Nations who are successful in the examination and are selected to fill vacancies will be subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 14 to 17 below.

4. Staff members of the Secretariat applying for the examination must:

(a) Have Russian as their main language;[1]

(b) Have a perfect command of Russian and an excellent knowledge of English and at least one of the other official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, French or Spanish). The Board of Examiners, appointed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, requires that candidates' claims to knowledge of official languages be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files. Staff members who have been enrolled in a United Nations language course in any of the languages claimed must have passed the United Nations language proficiency examination in that language. Candidates who have not attended the United Nations language courses in the languages claimed must substantiate their claims to knowledge of those languages. For that purpose, staff members should give a clear explanation on the P.11 or Personal History Profile (PHP) form of how they acquired their knowledge of the languages claimed;

(c) Hold at least a three-year, first-level degree from a university or institution of equivalent status at which Russian is the language of instruction or hold a university degree from a school of translation at which Russian is the language of instruction. On an exceptional basis, the Board of Examiners may authorize candidates whose degree has been obtained in an educational establishment where Russian is not the language of instruction to sit for the examination if there is sufficient evidence in the candidate's official status file, P.11 or PHP form of the required perfect command of the Russian language.

5. In order to meet the Organization's need to recruit staff for language posts who will serve for a reasonable period of time before reaching retirement age, staff members who do not serve on 100-series appointments and who will have reached age 56 by the deadline for submission of applications, **5 August 2008**, will not be eligible to sit for the examination. There is no age limit for full-time staff members serving on 100-series appointments.

6. The requirement for a degree or its equivalent from a university or institution of equivalent status mentioned in paragraph 4 (c) above may be waived for staff members who, in the judgement of the Board of Examiners, have adequate post-secondary education qualifications from a university or institution of equivalent status and adequate secondary education qualifications from an establishment at

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Russian as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.

which the principal language of instruction is Russian, in addition to five years of continuous service with the Secretariat by 31 December 1989.

7. All applicants should submit with their applications a one-page essay in Russian, explaining the reasons for their interest in taking this examination. All applications will be reviewed by the Board of Examiners. In instances where a large number of applications are received, the Board reserves the right to admit to the examination only the most qualified candidates based on a review of the qualifications that are over and above the minimum criteria set out in paragraph 4 above. Convoked candidates may be required to submit evidence of degrees, knowledge of languages and/or relevant experience prior to convocation. All applicants will be notified of the Board's decision in respect of their application. **The Board's decisions are final.**

8. The written examination for **verbatim reporters, to be held tentatively on 1 October 2008**, will consist of four papers:

(a) Translation of an English text into Russian (one hour and a half, morning of 1 October 2008). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Bringing the Russian version of a text into line with the original of a text in any of the official United Nations languages other than Russian and English (one hour, morning of 1 October 2008);

(c) Editing of and making all necessary logical and stylistic corrections to an original Russian text (one hour and a half, afternoon of 1 October 2008);

(d) Bringing the Russian version of a text into line with the original English (two hours, afternoon of 1 October 2008).

9. The written examination for **editors, to be held tentatively on 2 October 2008**, will consist of three papers:

(a) Editing of a general text in Russian and completion of an exercise in Russian style and usage (two hours and a half, morning of 2 October 2008). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Editing of a text in Russian to bring it into line with a text edited in English (two hours, afternoon of 2 October 2008);

(c) Translation into Russian of one text chosen by the candidate from a total of four texts, one in each of the official United Nations languages other than Russian and English (one hour and a half, afternoon of 2 October 2008).

10. The written examination for **translators/précis-writers, to be held tentatively on 3 October 2008**, will consist of four papers:

(a) Translation into Russian of a general text in English (two and a half hours, morning of 3 October 2008). It should be noted that this paper is eliminatory. Only candidates who are successful in this paper will have their other papers marked;

(b) Translation into Russian of one text chosen by the candidates from a total of four texts, one in each of the other official languages of the United Nations

(Arabic, Chinese, French or Spanish) other than English and Russian (one and a half hours, morning of 3 October 2008);

(c) Preparation of a summary in Russian of a text in English (one and a half hours, afternoon of 3 October 2008);

(d) Translation into Russian of one English text, to be chosen by the candidate from a total of three specialized texts (economic, legal, scientific/technical) (one and a half hours, afternoon of 3 October 2008).

11. The use of a dictionary or any other reference material will **not** be permitted during the examinations. In addition, cell phones and other electronic devices may not be brought into the examination room.

12. On the basis of the results of each written examination, the Board of Examiners will invite selected candidates to a competency-based interview. The Board will interview each candidate to assess whether he or she possesses the competencies required for the position. Candidates may also be required to take some additional short tests at the time of the interview. The interview is an integral part of the examination. Therefore, candidates who are invited for an interview should **not** assume that they will automatically be offered an assignment. Successful candidates who receive an offer of appointment are strongly encouraged to accept it, as declining may affect their prospects of receiving a subsequent offer.

13. On the basis of the overall results of each examination, the Board will recommend to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management the names of candidates who qualify for inclusion in the relevant roster. All candidates admitted to each examination will be informed in writing of the Board's final recommendation in respect of their candidature. **The Board's recommendations are not subject to appeal**. The Board **does not** release individual scores/results.

14. Staff members selected to fill vacancies will be assigned as Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers for a trial period of two years. Staff members below the P-2 level or who are in the General Service category will receive a special post allowance to the P-2 level. Staff members at the P-2 and P-3 levels will be assigned at their respective levels. During the trial period, following on-the-job training if necessary, successful candidates who are recruited as translators/précis-writers should be prepared to use a computer workstation, including for keyboarding and digital dictation of their translations. In order to be confirmed as editors, successful candidates will need to have word-processing skills or to acquire them following on-the-job training during the two-year trial period. In order to be confirmed as verbatim reporters, successful candidates will need to have computer and word-processing skills and be fast, accurate typists.

15. Successful candidates in translation assigned directly to duty stations away from Headquarters will normally be required to spend the first six months of their trial period in the corresponding service at Headquarters.

16. Staff members with a special post allowance to the P-2 level and those already at the P-2 level who complete the trial period successfully and are recommended by the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and the Office of Human Resources Management may be promoted to the P-3 level. Staff members already at the P-3 level who complete the trial period successfully will be confirmed

in their functions at the P-3 level. Staff members on fixed-term appointment will be eligible to be considered for permanent appointment subject to the requirements of the staff rules in force. Staff members who do not complete the trial period successfully will be reassigned to posts at their previous levels and the special post allowance, if any, will be discontinued.

17. In accordance with the needs of the services/sections/units, successful candidates may be called upon to work outside normal working hours, including weekends and holidays.

18. Staff members applying for the examination should complete the attached form and submit it together with a copy of the P.11 or PHP form and the essay, mentioned in paragraph 7 above, **no later than 5 August 2008**, to:

2008 Competitive Examinations for Russian-language Verbatim Reporters, Editors and Translators/Précis-Writers
Examinations and Tests Section
Division for Organization Development
Office of Human Resources Management
Room S-2575
United Nations Secretariat
New York, New York 10017
Fax No.: (212) 963-3683
E-mail: OHRM_exam@un.org

Applications may be sent by e-mail, fax or mail. To the extent possible, applicants are strongly encouraged to submit their applications early and, preferably, by e-mail or fax. Applications received after the aforementioned deadline will **not** be considered. Incomplete applications, including those without the essay, will **not** be considered either.

19. In order to ensure receipt of all applications submitted by staff members from offices away from Headquarters, such staff members are requested to return their applications to the Division for Organizational Development of the Office of Human Resources Management through the Chief Administrative Officer or Director of the United Nations Information Centre of their respective duty stations by **5 August 2008**, the deadline for receipt of applications in the Examinations and Tests Section.

Application (for staff members of the United Nations Secretariat only)

2008 competitive examinations for Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers

Index No. ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Last name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Category ☐☐ Level ☐☐

First name ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐ Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of entry on duty Month ☐☐ Year ☐☐☐☐

Type of contract _____ Expiration date _____

Department/office _____ Duty station _____

Room No. _____ Tel. extension _____ Fax extension _____ E-mail _____

Have you taken this examination before? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

Have you taken another United Nations competitive examination? Yes ☐ Year ☐☐☐☐ No ☐

If yes, which examination(s) _____

What is your main language?[1] ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Please complete an up-to-date P.11 or PHP form and attach it to this application. Describe your educational background and work experience (giving dates and length of time) in the areas of verbatim reporting, editing and translation, if any.

Applications submitted without a P.11 or PHP form or without the one-page essay in Russian mentioned in paragraph 7 will NOT be considered.

Please indicate the examination(s) for which you are applying. Your application will not be considered if this part of the application is not completed.

☐ (a) The competitive examination for Russian-language verbatim reporters;

☐ (b) The competitive examination for Russian-language editors;

☐ (c) The competitive examination for Russian-language translators/précis-writers.

I certify that the information I have provided above is correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date _____ Signature _____

I have read information circular ST/IC/2008/31 and I understand that, if I am successful in the 2008 competitive examinations for Russian-language verbatim reporters, editors and translators/précis-writers, and recommended for inclusion in the roster, my assignment as a Russian-language verbatim reporter, editor or translator/précis-writer will be subject to my acceptance of the conditions of service indicated in paragraphs 14 to 17 of that circular.

Date _____ Signature _____

Notes

[1] "Main language" should be understood to be the language in which the candidate is best able to work. Candidates' claims to Russian as their main language must be supported by relevant documentation in their official status files.